

Apprentice Program Training

Apprenticeship training in California originated with passage of the Shelly-Maloney Apprentice Labor Standards act of 1939.

Apprenticeship training is a formal organized system of on-the-job training in which the apprentice learns by "doing", and earns while learning. It is based upon a written agreement, called an indenture, between the employer and the apprentice. This agreement spells out how long the apprenticeship training lasts, what kinds of job tasks (called "work processes") are to be performed while working on-the-job, and what kinds of subject matter and work related knowledge must be learned through a program of home study and classroom instruction.

The duration of apprenticeship training varies from trade to trade. In the California Department of Water Resources, the periods of apprenticeship training are as follows:

Utility Craftworker	3 years
Hydroelectric Plant Operator Apprentice	3 years
Hydroelectric Plant Electrician Apprentice	4 years
Hydroelectric Plant Mechanic Apprentice	4 years

The term of apprenticeship is divided up into six-month periods. At the end of each six-month period, on-the-job work and classroom/home study progress is evaluated by the apprentice's supervisors and recommendation made to a Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC) which approves or disapproves advancement to the next six-months level of training and salary.

Generally speaking, after candidates have successfully passed the examination process and have been hired as apprentices - either operator, electrician, mechanic or utility craftworker - they are assigned to work under close observation of a fully qualified and knowledgeable worker who has completed apprenticeship training and has been certified by the State of California as a "journey-person".

During the first year of training, apprentices will receive detailed instructions on-the-job, attend several weeks of classroom instructions in technical subject matter and complete approximately 100-150 hours of home study courses. In the second year, apprentices will continue to receive classroom instruction, on-the-job instruction, and work under the supervision of a journey-level worker but will perform some tasks with minimum supervision. In succeeding years, apprentices will perform more and more complex tasks, demonstrating the knowledge and abilities required on-the-job. When the term of apprenticeship training has been successfully completed and all requirements have been met, the employer (Department of Water Resources), certifies the information to the Department of Industrial Relations, and the apprentice is issued a certificate and becomes eligible to be employed as a journey-person.

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Training Triangle

The position of Apprentice is an opportunity to learn the trades and craft from qualified journey-persons. Apprentice training within the Department of Water Resources is of a highly intensive technical nature and is comprised of the following interrelated elements:

A. On-The-Job-Training

This is the actual day-to-day hands-on work in which the apprentice "learns by doing." Generally, 1820 hours of on-the-job experience per year. A hands-on proficiency test is given every six-months to check and verify that the apprentice is gaining applicable and measureable experience. These tests must be passed with a minimum score of 70%. Three failures of the same test will result in termination of the Apprentice Agreement.

B. Classroom Training

The Department of Water Resources Joint Apprenticeship Committee has established classroom courses in which a variety of classes are taught during regular working hours at Department facilities. Subject matter ranges from Math Review to the Theory of System Operation. The number of hours of classroom training required each year is different for each apprentice trade. Usually the classes are 40 hours in duration or one work week. A test is given at the end of each class, they must be passed with a minimum score of 70%. Three failures of the same test will result in termination of the Apprentice Agreement.

C. Home Study

As the name implies, there is a substantial program of study that is to be completed away from the job site at the apprentice's home. It will be essential to establish a regular time and place to study and do a certain amount of the related training (home study). At the completion of each unit of home study a written test is given on the material covered in that particular unit. They must be passed with a minimum score of 70%. Three failures of the same test will result in the termination of the Apprentice Agreement.

Every six-months, a closed book final examination is given, all the home study material covered for that particular six-month period, will be subject to testing.

Again, these six-month closed book final exams must be passed with a minimum score of 70%. Three failures of the same test will result in the termination of the Apprentice Agreement.

All three of these training phases: on-the-job, classroom, and home study; are integrated so that each reinforces the other. Each element is just as important as the other.